



Daily Herald Photo/Patrick J. Krohn

Fifty years after witnessing death on Iwo Jima, Keith Renstrom sits in the living

room of his Orem home and shows his war memorabilia, including a secret map,

uniforms, weapons and his Purple Heart and Bronze Star medals.

# Iwo memories still overwhelming

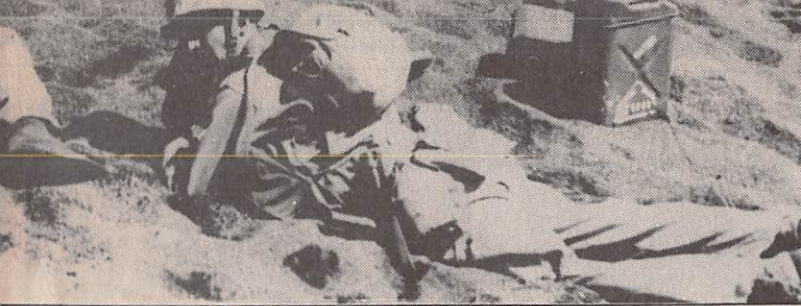
By PAT CHRISTIAN  
The Daily Herald

U.S. Marine Corps gunnery sergeant who helped take the Japa-

bons to remember the dead," Renstrom said.

lights lit up modern Marines in historic World War II uniforms





the invasion of  
and Captain  
phed by Asso-  
senthal. In the

background are numerous dead soldiers. Four days later Rosenthal would take the photograph of the flag raising at Iwo Jima, and it would become the most famous icon of the war.

helping to remove the hatred.  
If war elsewhere for Renstrom was bad, nothing ever did match Iwo's deadliness and carnage.

There was Chief.  
"I called him that because he was part American Indian," Renstrom said. "He was one of my men and I was talking to him."

"He was standing up, and I said get down and I was waiting for him to answer when he was struck."

The bullet passed through the soldier's pack and hit a spoon. The slug and spoon sped through Chief's chest splattering Renstrom with carnage.

"I actually saw him die before my eyes," he said.

Overall, Renstrom said he saw nearly 40 Americans killed before he was wounded on the 11th day

needs for the day and hearing a briefing on their daily mission.

Around 10 a.m., his group's platoon leader was killed, and Renstrom told a higher-up that he would fill in until another platoon leader was found.

Later that day, he radioed for naval guns to fire on an enemy position. "Then I saw this hand come above a rock wall above us and an enemy soldier stood up and threw a grenade."

Renstrom quickly grabbed a rifle and killed the soldier, but the grenade landed a few feet away from him and exploded.

Shrapnel ripped through his chin and other fragments lodged in his arm and within two-and-a-half inches of his heart.

Still, the flag-raising at Iwo Jima was a

(See IWO, Page A2)  
"We could see the flag, and at toward Mount Suribachi.  
strom looked up from his position. Fifty years ago today, Ren-  
ed in Washington D.C.  
fashioned into a monument local-  
The historic image was later  
23, 1945.  
he photographed it on Iwo Feb.  
Joe Rosenthal immortalized when  
Associated Press photographer

wreath was placed in a waiting  
beach and dropped into the water  
just as the sun set... I was doing  
great until the helicopter flight,  
then emotions became pretty  
overwhelming.  
'I kept seeing the death of  
guys I had known there."  
The flag-raising reenactment  
When a curtain was pulled,  
came after sunset.



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servances with his wife, Jody.

**Related story, Page A9**

Renstrom said he remained composed up until the ceremony for the men who gave their lives. Then he fell prey to emotion and memories.  
"There was a wreath with rib-

Death and carnage experi-  
enced 50 years ago on Iwo Jima  
drifted back to an Orem man at-  
tending a reunion with other sur-  
vivors of the World War II battle.  
Held at Camp Pendleton, Cal-  
if., last weekend, the event in-  
cluded a live reenactment of the  
raising of the American flag on  
Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima 50  
years ago today.  
Keith Renstrom, a former